Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Working paper submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic

I. Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

1. The Syrian Arab Republic was one of the first States in the region of the Middle East to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968 and firmly believes that the possession of nuclear weapons by any State or acquisition of those weapons by non-State actors or terrorist groups threatens international peace and security. Syria has affirmed, in all international forums, its continuing commitment to its international undertakings under the Treaty, which it considers the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and an international reference that accords the States parties the inalienable right to acquire nuclear technology for use in various peaceful applications.

2. The Syrian Arab Republic recalls that the resolution to extend the Treaty indefinitely, which was adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, would not have been possible had it not been for the understanding reached at that time whereby the nuclear-weapon States committed to a review of the concerns of many States parties in the Middle East region, particularly the need to pressure the Israeli entity to accede to the Treaty, unconditionally place all its installations under comprehensive safeguards without further delay and eliminate all its military nuclear capabilities, which are not subject to international supervision, in order to pave the way for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. However, that has not happened to date.

3. The Syrian Arab Republic expresses its deep concern over the failure to achieve the Treaty's objectives. It hopes that the final document of the 2020 First Preparatory Committee of the States parties to the Treaty will include serious and effective demands in respect of:

(a) Achieving the universality and maintaining the credibility of the Treaty;

(b) Treating the issues relating to non-proliferation and comprehensive nuclear disarmament in a balanced manner;

(c) Protecting the inalienable right of all Treaty parties to the use of nuclear energy for various peaceful applications, without discrimination;

(d) Pressuring Israel to accede unconditionally to the Treaty as a non-nuclear party and to submit all its nuclear facilities to international inspection in accordance

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with the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

4. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses the obligation of nuclear-weapon States under article I of the Treaty to undertake not to transfer to Israel any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or any direct or indirect control of weapons or such devices, and not to assist, encourage or spur Israel in any way whatsoever to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or to acquire control thereof in any other manner.

II. Nuclear disarmament

5. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the nuclear-weapon States must comply with article VI of the Treaty and the 13 points set out in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. The Syrian Arab Republic expresses its concern at the nuclear-weapon States' continued development and proliferation of nuclear warheads, which is contrary to the Treaty and United Nations General Assembly resolutions on nuclear disarmament, the most recent of which is General Assembly resolution 70/38 of 7 December 2015, entitled "Follow-up to nuclear disarmament obligations agreed to at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons".

6. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms the importance of working earnestly towards the conclusion of a comprehensive, non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable treaty to eliminate the stock of nuclear weapons and fissile material and to ban the production of any fissile material used in the production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as doing so is a primary step towards nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

7. The Syrian Arab Republic calls on all States to declare and adhere to a voluntary halt to the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/40 of 7 December 2015, entitled "United action with renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons".

8. The Syrian Arab Republic, seeking to uphold the credibility and spirit of the Treaty, emphasizes the need for the 2020 Review Conference and its preparatory committees to consider the concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States as expressed in their national reports.

III. Peaceful uses of nuclear energy

9. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that article IV of the Treaty, which accords all States parties the inalienable right to obtain nuclear technology for various peaceful applications, must be enforced in a balanced, non-selective manner. The Syrian Arab Republic supports the inclusion of this right in the Final Document of the current preparatory session, in order to preclude any new interpretations that may conflict with the spirit of the Treaty and undermine its credibility.

10. The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the need to uphold the primary role of IAEA as provided in its Statute, which is to promote the use of nuclear technology, to facilitate the interchange of information, equipment, materials and scientific services, to encourage and assist the States parties in conducting scientific research for peaceful purposes and to provide them with technical assistance.

11. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that political, economic or military restrictions should not be imposed, nor should any other conditions be imposed that

conflict with the Statute of IAEA on the cooperation and technical assistance provided by IAEA to States parties, particularly developing States.

12. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms the need to strike a balance between IAEA verification activities and its dissemination of nuclear technology and applications, in order to uphold the provisions of article III of the Treaty. That article stresses that verification under IAEA comprehensive safeguards agreements is an indispensable element of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

13. The Syrian Arab Republic supports IAEA and its mandate to carry out its assigned functions within the three main areas of the Treaty, namely, non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

IV. Comprehensive safeguards agreement

14. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that it complies fully with the provisions of the comprehensive safeguards agreement that it concluded with IAEA in 1992 pursuant to the Treaty. Under that agreement, Syria established a national system to account for and monitor nuclear material, and created the groundwork and facilities necessary to ensure that IAEA inspectors could carry out their work effectively under the agreement from the time of its signing to date.

15. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms the importance of the comprehensive safeguards agreements. It urges all States that have not yet concluded such an agreement to do so promptly in order to universalize the comprehensive safeguards, which the 2000 Treaty Review Conference set forth as a primary objective in order to consolidate and strengthen verification activities within the non-proliferation regime.

16. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that IAEA alone is authorized to verify and ensure that States parties comply with the safeguards agreements that have concluded with the Agency. When evaluating the outcome of verification processes, IAEA must rely on documented and corroborated information instead of information obtained from open sources or on assumptions, intelligence information and the like, in order to maintain the neutrality, credibility and professionalism of IAEA.

17. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that IAEA must safeguard the confidentiality of all information collected during its inspections of a State or received from a State.

18. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms the need to maintain the distinction between the legal obligations of States parties and voluntary, confidence-building measures, as provided in the Final Document of the last Treaty Review Conference held in May 2010 in New York. That document states that accession to an additional protocol is voluntary. Thus, all States should take care to avoid confusing voluntary and mandatory measures, in order to ensure the credibility of international resolutions and preclude the conversion of voluntary commitments into commitments involving legal safeguards.

V. Middle East nuclear-weapons-free zone

19. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone is an important disarmament measure that would strengthen the non-proliferation regime, help consolidate peace and security at the regional and international levels and preserve the credibility of the Treaty.

20. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a positive step and an effective contribution to the achievement of the objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament as a prelude to creating a safe, stable world. The Syrian Arab Republic looks to the international community to adopt practical, effective steps to establish a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone.

21. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that Israel's failure to accede to the Treaty, its refusal to subject all its nuclear facilities to international inspection by IAEA and its disregard of all relevant international resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly, the most recent of which are General Assembly resolution 70/24 of 7 December 2015, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", and General Assembly resolution 70/70 of 7 December 2015, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", as well as its disregard of resolutions adopted by IAEA and the Treaty Review Conferences, has made it impossible to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

22. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the establishment of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone should in no way be linked to the peace process in the region. It reiterates that any definition of the States of the Middle East developed for this purpose does not in any way constitute a definition of the Middle East region. Rather, such a definition should be used only for the purposes of the 2020 Treaty Review Conference and its preparatory committees.

VI. 2012 international conference on implementing the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty

23. The Syrian Arab Republic again calls for the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. That resolution, which is an integral part of a package that includes one decision and three resolutions adopted without a vote, extended the Treaty indefinitely in 1995. The Final Document of the 2000 Treaty Review Conference, which states that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East will remain valid until its goals and objectives are achieved, should thus be honoured.

24. The Syrian Arab Republic regrets the failure to convene the 2012 international conference called for in the Final Document of the 2010 Treaty Review Conference. That conference was to have been attended by all States of the Middle East and was to have addressed the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

25. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the success of the 2020 Treaty Review Conference will depend primarily on the full implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Treaty Review and Extension Conference. It will also depend on the commitment of all concerned parties to establish a zone in the Middle East that is free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction.

VII. Negative security assurances

26. The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that only the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons can provide an absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and that the indefinite extension adopted in 1995 does not in any way imply that nuclear-weapon States will retain their nuclear arsenals indefinitely, as that would be inconsistent with the integrity and sustainability of the

nuclear non-proliferation regime, both vertically and horizontally, and contrary to the objective of maintaining regional and international security and stability.

27. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the final document of the 2020 Treaty Review Conference must include effective international arrangements for arriving at a legally binding international instrument on security assurances. Pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/25 of 7 December 2015, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", the nuclear-weapon States would commit to providing unconditional security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty against the use or threat of use nuclear weapons.

28. The Syrian Arab Republic again calls for the establishment of a working group to monitor the legally binding negative security assurances of the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty as a prelude to arriving at an international instrument banning the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, pursuant to United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/62 of 7 December 2015, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons".

VIII. Illegal trafficking of radioactive and nuclear materials

29. The Syrian Arab Republic, pursuant to its national legislation and regulations, closely monitors land, sea and air border crossings to combat illegal trafficking in radioactive nuclear materials.

30. The Syrian Arab Republic scrupulously upholds all of its relevant international commitments. It participates effectively in the review of a number of relevant international conventions and instruments and seeks to strengthen its national legislative frameworks in that regard. The Syrian Arab Republic applies the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and actively participates in a number of meetings that develop guidelines for the importation and exportation of radioactive materials.

IX. Withdrawal from the Treaty

31. The Syrian Arab Republic believes that withdrawal from the Treaty undermines its universality and that any proposal to amend article X would damage the Treaty's credibility and destroy the entire non-proliferation regime, unless all States parties explicitly declared their intent to comply by law with the new amendments and to ratify them. Otherwise, any amendments would have no basis in international law.